

August 9, 2007

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Laura Hendrix
Ravalli County Planning Office
Administration Building
Hamilton, MT 59840

Ravalli County Commissioners

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Dear Laura:

On Tuesday evening, August 7, I attended the streamside setback committee meeting in the Commissioners' conference room. I would like to respectfully address some concerns and wish your response.

My wife & I own a 40+ acre parcel of land which fronts Highway 93 south of Victor, which has river & Mill Creek through the property. Groundwater monitoring has been conducted in the past. A septic was installed October 1999 with final approval, the well drilled November 2001, and Montana Power in November 2001 ran a power service station to the homesite. Ravalli County assigned street # 1670 Highway 93, September 4, 2001. To date, the house has not been constructed. Committee discussion Tuesday evening included Ravalli County Commissioners' mandate to produce a streamside setback document by September 7, 2007, to allow them an immediate vote for enactment of county-wide Interim Zoning Ordinance. Setbacks were discussed to likely be 50' to 400'. Our homesite exceeds 50', but not 400'. Would this zoning ordinance be problematic to us? Or shall I immediately break ground?

We own a one acre building site up Laird Creek Road, south of Darby. Groundwater monitoring has been completed in the recent past, and was approved for an engineered septic system. The system was engineered, installed in 2006 with final approval, and the well drilled in 2006. Laird Creek flows through this parcel. There was sufficient separation for the septic system to be approved. Because of parcel size, building site will likely be slightly less than 50' from the Creek. Will the zoning ordinance have an impact here? Or shall we begin immediate construction of the permitted 3 bedroom dwelling?

Adjacent to the above parcel, we purchased a 1.5 acre parcel in 2006. The cabin burned down in the fires of 2000 when the prior owner had the property. They had their cabin there since the early 1960's. The septic system should be upgraded. Dan Hooten from the Ravalli County Environmental Health office said we can request a replacement system there to be installed (or conduct future groundwater monitoring). A system cannot be denied because of existence of a prior structure. This specific tract is shown by photo in the Fires of 2000 book. The replacement dwelling would have similar setback spacing as the above described parcel. Any streamside setback impact here? Or shall I immediately purchase a replacement septic permit & begin building prior to September 7?

We anticipate your timely reply. Thanks for your consideration and response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Merle Unruh', written in a cursive style.

Merle Unruh
416 Montana Way
Victor, MT 59875

cc: Ravalli County Commissioners
Ravalli County Environmental Health Dept.
Clay Dethlefsen – Committee Chair